

After Action Report:

Water Boil Advisory Incident: Executive Summary



CITY OF BRIGHTON

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WATER BOIL ADVISORY INCIDENT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 3, 2013, the City of Brighton (“the City”) issued a Water Boil Advisory to all consumers, which lasted approximately sixty hours for most residents. The purpose of the City’s Executive Summary is to accurately summarize the actions and events leading up to, during, and immediately after the event and to identify the City’s best practices, lessons learned, and to make recommendations for improvements.

On July 1 and 2, 2013, water samples were routinely collected and analyzed, as part of a routine process conducted by the Utilities Department monthly at designated locations. Results confirmed the presence of a contaminate at a single site on July 2, and, as is routine, another set of samples were collected for testing (*Note: there is a standard 24 hour timeframe between when the testing of the samples begins at the laboratory and when the results of the testing are released; positive results are immediately reported by the testing laboratory to the Water Quality Control Division [WQCD] of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment [CDPHE]*). On July 3, a retest sample yielded a positive result. Pursuant to the *Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations*, this second positive sample necessitated the issuance of a Tier 1 Public Notification advising consumers of a Water Boil Advisory for the City’s water system. This notification was to be issued no later than 24 hours from announcement of this requirement, and at approximately 18:00 on July 3 the City began to notify the public of the Advisory, utilizing a variety of communication mediums. At the same time, an emergency coordination group of the City was meeting, and an emergency City Council session was convened. At about 19:00, a press conference was held, providing the public with additional information regarding the water system and current status of the situation.



The City’s emergency coordination group continued to meet regularly to plan and mitigate consequences of the Water Boil Advisory. The City’s Call Center was activated, the public was frequently updated with current information, a neighborhood informational meeting was coordinated, a variety of resources was provided to residents of the affected neighborhood, and bottled water was collected and distributed. In the meantime, the City’s Utilities Department staff was working continuously to collect and retest samples, execute the requirements issued by the State Health Department, work with residents in the affected area and bring the entire water system back online.

On July 6 at approximately 08:00, based on the results of samples taken the previous day, the citywide Water Boil Advisory was rescinded. Only the residents in the affected, hydraulically isolated neighborhood remained without normal service. The Utilities Department continued to work with the residents to inspect, sanitize and flush the system in the affected neighborhood and on the morning of July 7, the service was restored fully to residents in the affected neighborhood.

Due to the isolated nature of the positive samples and the higher than required residual chlorine

levels in the drinking water, the City has maintained and continues to maintain the safety and integrity of the water system during the Water Boil Advisory. With this in mind, the Water Boil Advisory gave the City an opportunity to test and exercise its systems and plans in the context of a real world event, and has given the City Management and staff the opportunity to systematically evaluate its tools, actions and capabilities with the goal of reinforcing the pieces that work well, and improving upon the lessons learned.

Fundamentally, the greatest strength of the City is its people. The City of Brighton's leadership, department directors, and employees, as well as the residents- in their patience, resiliency and ingenuity- define who we are as a city, and demonstrate our collective values and ideals. The most notable successes in every area examined are attributed to the dedication and time the staff spent to ensure the highest level of service was provided to residents. City employees worked long hours, took on extra responsibility, and worked with flexibility and poise in unfamiliar roles throughout this incident.

As is commonly revealed in post incident evaluations, communication and coordination, especially as an emergency first begins to evolve, can always be improved upon. Increased communication and coordination with outside agencies, such as state and local health departments, and internally among department directors and partners can help to facilitate an incident management system. Enhanced coordination can improve and enhance planning in anticipation of an incident, establishing and evaluating priorities, the execution of tasks, as well as the transition to incident recovery. Recommendations specifically addressing communication and coordination will be addressed internally within the context of City improvement planning.



In conclusion, the Water Boil Advisory incident (i) verified that the City's ongoing processes to evaluate water quality works; and (ii) demonstrated the City's utmost commitment to the safety and security of its residents and the dedication and passion of leadership and employees in providing the highest possible level of service to residents during this event. The City of Brighton's commitment to excellence continues in always taking advantage of opportunities to learn, grow and improve.

Internal capability areas to be examined during City of Brighton's Water Boil Advisory Incident reviews:

1. Organizational Response,
2. Utilities Department Response,
3. Economic Impact,
4. Coordination with Health Departments- State and Local Public Health.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."- Martin Luther King, Jr.